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SUBJECT: IOM BI-REGIONAL WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS HORN OF AFRICA  
MIGRATION ISSUES

**¶1.** (SBU) Summary: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recently held a three-day bi-regional workshop on irregular migration flows from Eastern to Southern Africa. The workshop brought together representatives from eleven governments spanning Ethiopia to South Africa to discuss potential collaborative solutions for migration issues in the region. A presentation on a forthcoming IOM assessment of irregular movement of males from the Horn of Africa found no evidence of trafficking due to a lack of exploitation at the destination. However, the presentation highlighted the deception, human rights abuses, complicity of government officials, and lack of legal deterrents that affect those smuggled enroute to South Africa. While most governments were eager to benefit from freer migration in the region through increased remittances and job prospects for their citizens, only the government of Rwanda joined South Africa in supporting free movement, employment, and potential regularization for migrants. End Summary.

Migration From Horn Spurs Workshop

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**¶2.** (SBU) In February, the IOM held a three-day workshop in Blantyre, Malawi to address regional concerns regarding irregular migration flows to Southern Africa. The workshop, which included government representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, sought to find a collaborative solution for migration issues in the region. The conference, organized by IOM at the behest of the government of Malawi, focused primarily on migration from the Horn of Africa to South Africa and the affects on countries along this route.

**¶3.** (SBU) Among the key issues identified by participants was the need to increase data collection and information-sharing regarding migrants. Some suggested that a shared asylum system could help stop migrants from "shopping" for a country and speed asylum claim adjudications in the region. Many participants also pointed out differences in their respective national immigration laws that encourage migrants to flock to more accommodating countries.

IOM Research Reveals Deception, Abuses, and Complicity

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**¶4.** (SBU) Of interest to all participants was a presentation of a forthcoming IOM assessment (funded by the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons) of irregular movement of males from the Horn of Africa. The research found no evidence of human trafficking, primarily due to a lack of exploitation at the destination, but did highlight many abuses. In particular, smugglers deceived the smuggled about the cost, duration, and mode of transportation for the journey. Additionally, smugglers often subjected the men to human rights abuses including

beating and starvation. Smugglers also used robberies and imprisonments along the way to extort additional money from the smuggled, who were forced to call family and friends to wire additional funds, often delaying the trip by days.

¶5. (SBU) The draft assessment also found government officials complicit in the smuggling route. Over 80% of the smuggled men who were interviewed said they saw their smugglers pay bribes to government officials at some point in their journey. Overall, the assessment estimated that over 16,000 men move from Somalia and Ethiopia to South Africa per year, mostly by land. The average trip takes eight weeks to complete and the smuggled pay fees of approximately \$2000 to smugglers. Researchers said that approximately 80% of all Somalis and 60% of all Ethiopians smuggled to South Africa used the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi as a transit point. The assessment also noted that for many, South Africa is just another temporary waypoint in their ultimate journey through South America to the United States and Canada.

#### Many Wary of Economic Impact of Migrants

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¶6. (SBU) In a roundtable discussion, most governments were in favor of freer regional movement in principle, citing benefits such as increased trade, remittances, and employment. However, many were more concerned about migrants taking local jobs in their countries. Notably, representatives of the government of Rwanda voiced their support for allowing migrants free movement, employment opportunities, and even the possibility of regularization through dual citizenship in Rwanda. The Rwandans cited positive economic impacts immigrants can make in a country.

Unswayed, most countries voiced the need for increased funding to both combat illegal migration and make legal migration more efficient in the region.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: As noted in the IOM assessment, Malawi has become a nexus for migrant smuggling to South Africa. Malawian government officials remain disturbed that, in their view, northern neighbors continue to allow Somali migrants to pass southward while southern neighbors force the same back to Malawi. Like Malawi, many of the participating governments seemed to prefer attempts to turn back irregular migration. Rwanda's advocacy of free movement, employment opportunities, and potential citizenship for migrants clearly surprised many attendees, but did not seem to change any minds. The IOM assessment's findings on official corruption facilitating smuggling in the region was met with few comments; only the representatives of Mozambique asked for more proof. End Comment.

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